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TAGS: KMDR KPAO OPRC CI HA

SUBJECT: MEDIA REPORT - HAITIAN ELECTIONS

¶1. Four newspapers and one television station carried stories featuring Chilean officials' remarks on the ongoing situation in Haiti. The GOC reiterated its commitment to maintaining peacekeepers in Haiti for at least another 12 months while dismissing calls to withdraw soldiers after the elections. Chilean and OAS officials noted that recent violence has given to more tranquil days and the Minustah Chief appreciated the support he has received from ordinary Haitians. Summaries of press articles:

¶2. Conservative, independent "La Tercera" (circ. 102,000): "Chilean Minister of Defense Jaime Ravinet: GOC Bets On Troops Remaining in Haiti Another Year or Two" Minister Ravinet assessed the situation in Haiti after last Saturday's death of the Brazilian military leader there. Ravinet said the U.N. mission should support the inauguration of the elected Haitian president and remain there another 24 months. However, he admitted the Chilean authorities that assume in March would make the final decision, saying, "The true discussion will happen in June, with a new government and a new parliament. Our prediction, and what we have discussed, is that we envision another one or two years." Foreign Minister Ignacio Walker reported "the situation remains calm but volatile due to the actions of a few economically powerful groups who are determined to...impede the democratic elections." The GOC said President Lagos would use the Senate's authorization to extend Chilean troops' Haiti presence until next June.

¶3. Business and financial "Diario Financiero" (circ. 20,000): "Foreign Minister Walker Said 'Situation is Calm But Volatile': Chile to Maintain Peacekeeping Troops in Haiti for Two Years." The GOC reiterated Chile's commitment to Minustah's complex task and noted that a date for presidential and legislative elections had finally been established.

¶4. Conservative, afternoon "La Segunda" (circ. 31,834; 1/11): "Wave of Support for Chilean Ambassador in Haiti and End of Attacks." "The hate from some of (the Haitian) media generated a huge wave of affection and solidarity, reinforced by the death of Brazilian General Bacellar. Haitians are stopping me on the streets to shake my hands and inviting me to read Psalm 18 or Psalm 20. They are expressing enormous affection by saying 'May the Lord Protect you'. The ordinary Haitian is with us," said Minustah chief Juan Gabriel Valdes, who reported that in previous days there had been radio announcements in Creole every few minutes against the United Nations, its soldiers, officials and him: "It was slander like those on Rwandan radio before the massacres.... They called to empty the cities. They characterized the military as kidnappers, rapists, and...called me the author of Haitian society's destruction.... There is resistance among a few sectors that have abused this society for centuries against a democratic process." OAS Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza felt that the situation in Haiti "is moving toward calm these days. Even though it remains tense, I wouldn't say the electoral process is in jeopardy. Although the situation is on track, we have never said elections would be the end of the road. It is a big concern that some have mentioned there

would be nothing to do after the elections. I read a statement by a Chilean senator that worried me. This is not the moment to talk about a post-vote withdrawal but rather about how we move forward."

¶5. Government-owned, editorially independent "La Nacion" (circ. 3,800): "(Chilean) Peacekeeping Troops Reaffirm Commitment to Haiti"

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